

Tēnā koutou o Te Kōmihana Whai Hua o Aotearoa

More effective social services

On behalf of the Māori Party we present our submission to you on some of the questions raised in the issues paper, *More effective social services* (October 2014).

An inquiry into how social services can and should be improved is an important and timely undertaking; we acknowledge the Productivity Commission in its role as a mediator for change and improvement in this area. It is absolutely critical in considering the construction of social services, not as we know them but as they should be, that we dare to dream.

We wish to remind the Productivity Commission of the significant body of work already completed, on account of their own mandates, by the Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty (2012) and the Taskforce for Whānau-Centred Initiatives (2010). Needless to say the attention of these expert panels was similarly focused on the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders.

Our view is that the inquiry at hand should mutually reinforce the recommendations already set down by the aforementioned expert panels. Those matters presented within this submission which we consider to be mutually reinforcing include the role of Government as a leader, connector, steward, regulator, and ultimately, enabler; the desire for whānau to be self-managing, resilient, and successfully involved in wealth creation; and the vision of a framework for collaborative service provision which is cohesive, coordinated, complimentary, and sustainable through its community of practice.

In light of the current positioning of the Māori economy and the disproportionate number of Māori who access social services, it is clear that there are gaps across communities of practice which can be filled through enhanced collaborative efforts in information sharing, analysis, and response planning and implementation. We make a submission below on this point, that the idea of collaboration and partnership with Māori needs to be extended upon to ensure high level partnership in the collection of information for the Official Statistics System which is meaningful and relevant at a local level, that is, through a direct partnership between Statistics NZ and iwi. To emphasise a point made above, the role of Government here is to connect the relevant agents in order to enhance mutually beneficial outcomes.

Heoi anō, nā



Hon Te Ururoa Flavell
Co-leader of the Māori Party



Marama Fox
Co-leader of the Māori Party

How important are volunteers to the provision of social services?

Volunteers foster a culture of *manaakitanga* within their communities through the provision of social services by demonstrating compassion, solidarity, and respect for human dignity, for no material reason beyond the importance of the kaupapa.

The environment which *manaakitanga* helps to establish within a community is highly conducive to an environment of wellbeing for all community members. It is not simply the human capital volunteers bring to social services, but the cultural capital shared and represented through their acts of *manaakitanga*, which makes their contribution to social service provision invaluable.

Our culture of volunteering in Aotearoa must continue to be strengthened and fostered. In this respect it is important that the not-for-profit sector, as the means of expression for *manaakitanga* through volunteerism, is supported, particularly in its management of risks and succession issues which arise on account of their reliance on volunteers.

What role do iwi play in the funding and provision of social services and what further role could they play?

Iwi share an unbreakable bond with a high concentration of end users of the social services sector and this relationship should be better utilised to realise the best service response. A crucial role which iwi can play in the construction and provision of social services is in customer engagement; that is, knowing and understanding the needs of their communities and those end users who are their tribal affiliates, and designing systems and solutions with end user input.

The Māori Party submits that iwi must play a role in the:

- Strategic overview of how best to advance *Whānau Ora* outcomes, principally through a Whānau Ora Partnership Group between iwi and stakeholder Ministers.

- Identification and assessment of citizen and community needs, and be involved in evaluating the value and outcomes achieved.
- Supporting their members to design systems and solutions to meet their own needs and action this response through iwi-affiliated *Whānau Ora* navigators.
- Provision of social housing for its members, building on *He Whare Āhuru, He Oranga Tangata – The Māori Housing Strategy*, and also through the transfer of state houses to hapū and iwi.
- Holding public funds for small loans or grants to home owners for repairs to substandard houses in rural areas; this would run alongside other housing and community initiatives. We also support a similar concept recommended by the Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty with respect to ‘low or zero-interest loans to beneficiary parents or caregivers who are re-entering the workforce and who need initial financial support to achieve and sustain employment’ (2012:45).
- Strategic and frontline response to family violence.
- Care and protection of its young people.
- Accountability measures holding Government to account through the Tiriti o Waitangi partnership.

In the area of social impact bonds, which pay out on measurably improved social outcomes such as reductions in alcohol and drug use or improved financial stability, we would like to see iwi investing with the state for mutually agreed returns.

What are the opportunities for, or barriers to, social-services partnerships between private business, not-for-profit social service providers and government?

More end user choice and control is the greatest opportunity which lies in social service partnerships between private business, not-for-profit social service providers and Government; greater end user choice and control is also what lies at the heart of *Whānau Ora*.

When we consider how to improve *Whānau Ora*, increasing possibility lies in strengthening partnerships between *Whānau Ora* navigators, Government social service providers, not-for-profits, and private business.

As an example of how it can work, a *Whānau Ora* navigator based in Fairfield, Hamilton shared her experience of finding alternative solutions to housing needs for her clients through a partnership forged of her own volition, where Housing NZ has been a dead end. She has brought the rental agency sector together with other local *Whānau Ora* navigators and their clients to identify how they can all work together to meet their respective needs. At present, Government is the missing counterpart; their role, she suggests, should be to provide a direct link to the full accommodation entitlements which her clients may have access to.

Another opportunity lies in more intergovernmental partnerships. For example, we note the recommendation made by the Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty (2012:60) for Government to establish 'sustained funding for youth-friendly health and social services in all secondary schools'.

Yet another opportunity lies in the expansion of the micro-financing model to provide modest low-interest and zero-interest loans through Public-Private Partnerships. Indeed this is also supported by the Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty (2012:55).

Collaboration across private, not-for-profit (including iwi), and Government interests, has the potential to lead to more outcomes that are win-win, as well as outcomes that are more sustainable through a strengthened community of practice.

We submit that in order for partnerships to prosper, we need Government to:

- Make public policy objectives clear from here to the horizon and give clarity to the sector by publishing a pipeline of social service projects .
- Enable communities, create connections, and help to regulate partnerships.
- Support the full mix of national, regional and individual end user partnerships.
- Educate the public on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to explain why PPPs might be able to deliver better service outcomes than alternative options.
- Model the co-design that comes with collaboration and the alignment of sectors, starting with the Executive branch.

We need the co-design that comes with collaboration and the alignment of sectors to start within Government, particularly the Executive branch. Executive committees such as the *Ministerial Committee on Poverty* help set the scene for enhanced partnerships across the market place of social service providers, focused on the co-creation of new solutions for sharing resources.

Where and when have attempts to integrate services been successful or unsuccessful? Why?

In addition to *Whānau Ora*, which we believe is a successful model of integrated service, we are also optimistic about integration achieved through the social sector trials.

What is common to the social sector trials and *Whānau Ora* alike is the holistic approach each takes to service provision, as well as their structural approach to co-creating new



solutions and sharing resources. As the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives stated in its report to the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector (2010c:5), ‘a *spirit of collaboration* must be embedded between funders, providers, practitioners and whānau’.

In the words of the Taskforce we submit that a spirit of collaboration is critical to the success of service integration; a spirit which, by its very definition, permeates service design, service delivery, through to every relationship informing the process.

In the hope that such lessons will be transferred to future social service initiatives, we note the Ministry of Social Development’s final evaluation of the social sector trials (2013:9) where it is reported that the key success factors for achieving outcomes in the trials include:

- national leadership at the ministerial level
- skill and competence at the local level
- clear structures, processes and roles
- strong links between governance & front line operational staff
- fit for purpose services
- secure funding and resources
- shared responsibility across stakeholders

What examples are there of contract specifications that make culturally appropriate delivery easy or more difficult?

Based on our observations, as well as anecdotal evidence provided to us by our constituents and networks, specifications which make culturally appropriate delivery *more difficult* include:

- Quantity-based outcomes over quality-based outcomes.
- Narrowly focused specifications where problems facing clients are interrelated but may, on the face of it, fall outside the outcomes sought.
- Culturally-based specifications which lack adequate quality assurance.

Specifications which *strengthen* culturally appropriate delivery include:

- Those aimed at building trusting and constructive relationships between provider and client.
- Family-centred specifications which bolster the sustainability of outcomes.
- Capturing members of a family who may not otherwise present with social service needs or may not otherwise seek out that service for themselves.

How could the views of clients and their families be better included in the design and delivery of social services?

Healing and addressing health and wellbeing issues for Māori whānau starts with the whanau making informed decisions. In order to do this, and contribute effectively to the design and delivery of social services, whānau need to understand the nature and scope of what their decisions relate to.

Official resources which currently inform the general public of social services can be convoluted and complex. This presents a barrier to client involvement in the design and delivery of social services which is responsive to their particular needs. Moreover we would

challenge that the use of overly complicated and technical language in resources relating to social services is dispensable and ultimately erodes public confidence in the system.

It is our submission that the development of accessible and plain language resources by and for Government agencies and the social service sector at large is timely and necessary if we want clients and their families to be better included in these core processes.

A cornerstone of *Whānau Ora* is the power which end users have over the service they should ultimately receive. In facilitating the transmission of outcomes and goals which families themselves express a desire for, the role of *Whānau Ora* navigators is critical.

We submit that in order to maximise end user input *Whānau Ora* navigators should have adequate support and training to build their facilitation competencies.

What capabilities and services are Māori providers better able to provide?

An issue which clients face in their interactions with the social service sector is *whakamā* (shame). This condition can manifest itself in a range of ways which make engagement difficult for both the client and the provider.

Understanding this condition is key to engaging and connecting people with social services to meet their basic needs; it also informs an understanding of latent demand for social services. It is our submission that understanding *whakamā* and its manifestations, as well as knowing how to respond effectively, is a key competency for people working as service brokers or intermediaries in the social service sector between citizens and service providers.

We submit that Māori providers tend to be better able to provide services as brokers, intermediaries or navigators to the extent that they are able to recognise and work with clients manifesting signs of *whakamā*.

How successful have recent government initiatives been in improving commissioning and purchasing of social services? What have been the drivers of success, or the barriers to success, of these initiatives?

The Māori Party unreservedly endorses *Whānau Ora* as the most successful recent Government initiative in commissioning social services.

The primary driver of its success is the people: namely, the people who are the end users determining their own priorities and the solutions to their needs. Central to *Whānau Ora* is its focus on the determination of outcomes by end users.

Success is also defined by the fundamental belief that a holistic approach is what will work best to address drivers of persistent deprivation or instability in family life. Thus, the integration and coordination of stakeholders beyond perceived sectoral boundaries is critical.

It is important to remember that success in *Whānau Ora* is more than success in social service outcomes for individual end users; it is the realisation of whānau capability and capacity, as well as the realisation of service potential through integration.

We want to see increased opportunities for *Whānau Ora* commissioning beyond the Health, Māori Development, and Social Development portfolios, extending to Education, Justice, Housing, and other portfolios. At this point, we note the recommendation made by the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives (2010c:9) ‘that all government agencies with responsibilities for any aspect of whānau wellbeing commit to the Whānau Ora principles and support the Whānau Ora approach’.

What are the opportunities for and barriers to using information technology and data to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of social service delivery?

An opportunity for improving efficiency and effectiveness of social services exists in the sharing of information between key social services and health stakeholders.

As in the spirit of collaboration of *Whānau Ora* and the social sector trials, agencies and services with shared responsibilities for whānau health and wellbeing need to be sharing information for the benefit of clients, particularly those 'who are least able to access services and need multiple services and supports' (2012:57).

In order to realise the potential of this opportunity, Government needs to take a lead role in bringing together key stakeholders from private business, the not-for-profit sector (including iwi), and Government agencies, to work together for an improved information system. This is perceivably one step towards the vision of a shared child health record for every child through to the age of 17 inclusive (2012:57-58); and perhaps eventually, a shared whānau health record.

For what services is it most important to provide a relatively seamless transition for clients between providers?

It is our highest priority that people accessing social services in times of crisis experience a seamless transition between providers, where basic safety in their own home is of concern.

Children uplifted from their homes, as well as families involved in situations of domestic violence, are among those who we believe must experience seamless service provision for their personal safety, care and protection. People experiencing severe and persistent poverty also present a priority group.

At its root, we believe what is required to achieve seamlessness in service provision is collaborative governance, starting with a whole-of-government approach to care, protection, and whānau wellbeing.

In the area of family violence, continued support is required for the strategy, *Achieving Intergenerational Change*, which seeks to weave together the different strands of work taking place to form a stronger, integrated, and more cohesive response. In the care and protection of young people, continued support and expansion of the whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach demonstrated through the social sector trials is required. In both

areas it is important that a ‘whole-of-government’ approach is in fact taken by the *whole* of Government, inclusive of ACC and IRD. With reference to ACC and IRD, we would also seek a more seamless approach in assisting families with debt owing to more than one Government agency (2012:55).

The expectation is that where there is improved strategic coordination starting at a high level ministerial level, a collaborative mandate will be more clearly established amongst key stakeholders to ensure seamlessness and responsiveness through comprehensive services and supports, for instance across the provision of legal aid, police enforcement of protection orders, and Women’s Refuge.

Would an investment approach to social services spending lead to a better allocation of resources and better social outcomes? What are the current data gaps in taking such an approach? How might these be addressed?

We submit that a current data gap exists in relation to tribal specific data, collected during the census, relating to the health and social wellbeing of tribal members.

Such data would inform an investment approach to the allocation of resources by selected stakeholders. In the post-Treaty settlement economy, at least one of the stakeholders who might contribute resources to local social services on the evidentiary basis of census data are iwi and post-Treaty settlement entities.

We submit that just as Government has a specific obligation to protect and support the health of te reo Māori, for which reason statistics relating to te reo Māori are collected for the census, Government has a similar obligation to partner with Māori in gathering information for the ‘fair distribution of limited tax resources’ (2010a:7); a partnership between Statistics NZ and iwi, perhaps by way of the Iwi Leaders Group, is pertinent.

With support, we note the views of the Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty who have reported a data gap on welfare-to-work programmes (2012:45). An investment approach to promoting employment outcomes requires an evidence base to support the

significant Government expenditure currently directed into this particular area of social services.

Yet another gap exists in statistical data available on the relationship between Government and the charitable sector to show whether and to what extent charities are 'plugging the gap' in social services which the Government is failing to provide; where charities are providing a service that Government is not, to what extent are those charities having to meet any shortfall in funding?

More effective information systems between agencies and services is one way of addressing these data gaps. In the portfolios of Health and Social Development as they currently exist, there is an opportunity to use information systems for the co-creation of shared health records for children and, eventually, families. Beyond these portfolios, there is opportunity to address data gaps where other 'government agencies with responsibilities for any aspect of whānau wellbeing commit to the *Whānau Ora* principles and support the *Whānau Ora* approach' (2010c:9).

What institutional arrangements or organisational features help or hinder the uptake and success of innovative approaches to service delivery?

As this submission in its entirety has emphasised, successful social service design, investment, delivery, and management, requires cohesion across relevant communities of practice.

Collaboration through co-creation and sharing of resources, starting with the Executive of Government, has been key to the success of innovative approaches to social service delivery. There continues to be room for innovation where a genuinely *whole-of-government* approach is taken, for instance in assisting families with debt owing to more than one Government agency and in supporting survivors of family violence to attain measurable wellbeing.

References:

2013. *Final Evaluation Report: Social Sector Trials – Trialling New Approaches to Social Sector Change*. Centre for Social Research and Evaluation, Ministry of Social Development.

2012. *Solutions to Child Poverty in New Zealand: Evidence for Action*. Children’s Commissioner’s Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty.

2010a. *Social and population statistics information needs for New Zealand: Towards 2020*. Denise Brown. Statistics New Zealand.

2010b. *Funding Social Services: an historical analysis of responsibility for citizens’ welfare in New Zealand*. Carolyn Cordery and Shasa Halford. Submitted to the 6th Accounting History Conference, Wellington, August 18-20, 2010, “Accounting and the State”.

2010c. *Whānau Ora: Report of the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives*. Ministry for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

